



From Batman to Wonder Woman, Spider-Man to Superman, TV's superheroes have always taken us ...

UP, UP, AND AWA

LOOK, up in the sky. It's a bird, it's a plane ... it's a whole lot of human beings with super-human powers and really bad dress sense! Television's superheroes may have the ability to leap tall buildings in a single bound, but they are nearly always endowed with shocking hairstyles, flared trousers and a job that somehow hides their true identity. Well, somebody once said life wasn't meant to be easy, and things are never simple when you're a crime-fighting legend. Just look at how TV WEEK's Top 10 TV superheroes rate on the real-life scale.

1. SUPERMAN

Also known as: Clark Kent (played by George Reeves in *The Adventures Of Superman*, 1951-57, and now by Dean Cain in *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures Of Superman*). Occupation: Reporter for *The Daily Planet*. How he got to be a superhero: A refugee from the planet Krypton, the infant Superman was raised by Martha and Jonathan Kent. Coming from a planet with an atmosphere different from Earth's has given him powers that he uses to fight for truth, justice and the American Way.

● **The Man Of Steel (Dean Cain, above) definitely wins the best dressed superhero award.**

Powers: He has true super powers including X-ray vision, the ability to fly and more strength than all the Gladiators put together. His breath can freeze rivers and extinguish fires. But he can be disarmed by a hunk of Kryptonite from his home planet. Crime-fighting uniform: Blue tights and a red cape. Overall rating: 9/10. As long as he's played by Dean Cain and the lycra continues to defy gravity. Points deducted for: The fact that most people can't tell Clark Kent from Superman just because Clark wears glasses.

2. BATMAN

Also known as: Bruce Wayne (played by Adam West). Occupation: Millionaire playboy. How he got to be a superhero: Young Bruce Wayne witnesses a horrible crime in which his parents are killed. He vows to avenge his loss. Powers: Isn't really endowed with supernatural powers, but uses his obscene wealth to buy the best Batcontraptions around. His Batcave features

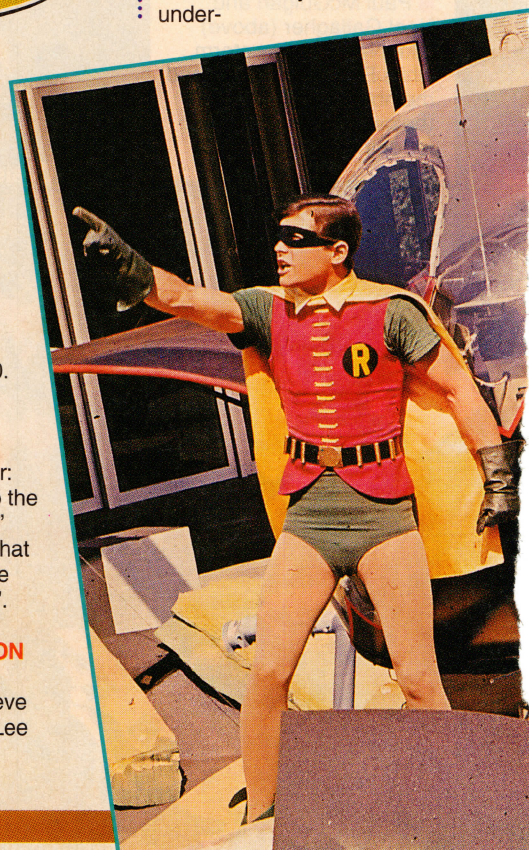
**40
YEARS OF
TELEVISION**

the turbo-charged Batmobile, and somewhere in a hanger there sits the Batcopter. Crime-fighting uniform: Grey and black suit with Batcape, Batmask and nifty utility Batbelt. Overall rating: 7/10. Caped Crusaders really shouldn't be this camp. Points deducted for: Slavish devotion to the Tim "The Toolman" school of thinking that decrees, "The more gadgets the better".

3. THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN

Also known as: Steve Austin (played by Lee Majors).

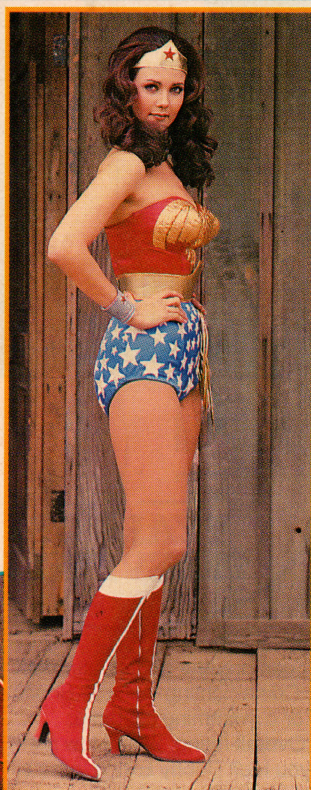
Occupation: Astronaut. How he got to be a superhero: Steve was severely injured in a training accident but has been rebuilt (at the cost of \$6 million) with bionic bits and pieces. He has to work to pay off his debt to the U.S. Government by under-





Y!

● (Clockwise from above) Spider-Man does whatever a spider can; Bill Bixby and Lou Ferrigno teamed up as the Hulk; Wonder Woman's suit defied gravity; Batman and Robin.



taking missions for the Office of Strategic Information (OSI), run by Oscar Goldman.

Powers: His bionic legs, a bionic arm and bionic eye give him amazing speed, strength and telescopic vision.

Crime-fighting uniform:

Generally jeans, check shirts and the occasional safari suit.

Overall rating: 5/10. His clothes are too Seventies for words.

Points deducted for: The fact that he never felt the urge to put his bionic powers to good use in the Olympics and the fact that his bionic legs were hairy.

4. THE BIONIC WOMAN

Also known as: Jaime Sommers (played by Lindsay Wagner).

Occupation: Schoolteacher.

How she got to be a superhero:

After a tragic skydiving accident, Jaime (a world-ranked tennis player) is rebuilt, thanks to some strong arm tactics from her bionic boyfriend, Steve.

Powers: Better hearing than a dog (except for Maximillian the bionic dog), thanks to a bionic ear, and she could beat the pants off Steffi Graf, thanks to her bionic legs and right arm.

Crime-fighting uniform: Bell-bottom pants and body shirts often tied at the waist.

Overall rating: 5/10. A real hippie chick.

Points deducted for: Writing really fast on the blackboard. Jaime's a nightmare teacher who could hear everything you whispered to your friends.

5. SPIDER-MAN

Also known as: Peter Parker (played by Nicholas Hammond). Occupation: A reporter for the New York Bugle.

How he got to be a superhero: Young Peter was bitten by a mutant spider and took on some of its arachnid qualities.

Powers: Strength and awesome climbing ability.

Crime-fighting uniform: Red-and-blue outfit that is equipped with a webshooter.

Overall rating: 4/10. Spiders are more creepy than heroic. Points deducted for: The fact that he didn't choose a more appealing creature from which to take powers.

6. WONDER WOMAN

Also known as: Diana Prince (played by Lynda Carter).

Occupation: A secretary for the Inter-Agency Defense Command.

How she got to be a superhero: Wonder Woman comes from Paradise Island, a mysterious place in the Bermuda Triangle

● Continued Page 66

TV WEEK, 6/4/96 65

UP, UP, AND AWAY!

● Continued from Page 65

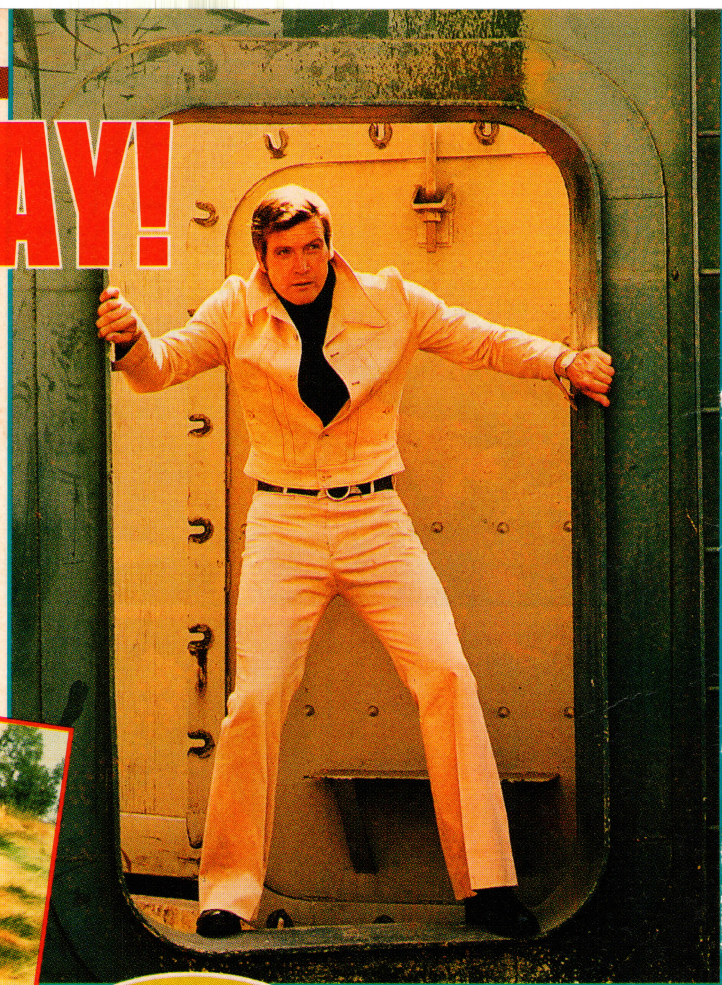
populated by superfit Amazonian-type women. She decides to leave her island home to help the Allies beat the Nazis during World War 2 and decides to stick around. Powers: Your standard speed, strength and agility plus a magic lasso and a pair of bracelets that repel bullets. Crime-fighting uniform: A red-and-blue outfit accessorised with gold belt, headpiece, bracelets and boots. Overall rating: 6/10. A strapless suit is totally impractical when one has to run, jump and somersault. Points deducted for: Despite her super powers, she never rose higher than a typist, and was outclassed as a Hollywood star by her sister, Wonder Girl (played by Debra Winger).

7. THE INCREDIBLE HULK

Also known as: Dr David Banner (played by Bill Bixby and Lou Ferrigno)

● Lee Majors (top) and Lindsay Wagner (right) never topped their bionic roles, while Atlantan Patrick Duffy moved to Dallas.

Occupation: Research scientist. How he got to be a superhero: David is dosed by gama radiation during a bomb test. Powers: When he gets angry he metamorphoses into the Hulk, he is driven by rage but is law-abiding and uses his strength only against villains. Crime-fighting uniform: Shredded trousers that are a couple of sizes too small. Overall rating: 2/10. For the Incredible Hulk, every day



40 YEARS OF TELEVISION

vehicles called Zords. Crime-fighting uniform: Each Ranger wears a lycra suit, with matching helmet, in red, black, pink, blue, yellow or white.

Overall rating: 7/10. Too color co-ordinated for words. Points deducted for: Dressing too much like Spider-Man.

10. THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO

Also known as: Ralph Hinkley (played by William Katt). Occupation: Schoolteacher. How he got to be a superhero: Ralph had an encounter with an alien spaceship in the Californian desert and was given a suit that endowed him with super powers. Powers: Unfortunately he lost the instruction manual that came with the suit and has to figure out how to use his powers of flight, invisibility and X-ray vision by trial and error. Crime-fighting uniform: A red suit. Overall rating: 4/10. Superheroes shouldn't bumble. Points deducted for: That out-of-control, curly Shirley Temple hairstyle and that annoyingly catchy theme song, Believe It Or Not.

Kathy Campbell

can breathe underwater, too. Crime-fighting uniform: Shorts or a swimming costume. Overall rating: 7/10. How can you fault Bobby Ewing in a pair of bathers? Points deducted for: Making a whole generation of kids try to swim like a demented dolphin.

9. MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS

Also known as: One of the biggest merchandising blitzes in the history of television. Occupation: Just your average teenagers. How they got to be superheroes: Zordon, a good guy who is pitted in a battle with the evil Rita Repulsa, decides to assemble a team of warriors to stop her from taking over the Earth. He finds them at a suburban mall and trains them to fight intergalactic scum. Powers: All six Power Rangers possess special Ninja fighting skills. They also have fighting

is a bad hair day. Points deducted for: Looking like a muscle-bound avocado. All brawn, no brains.

8. THE MAN FROM ATLANTIS

Also known as: Mark Harris (played by Patrick Duffy). Occupation: Scientific oddity. How he got to be a superhero: Mark was found washed up on the beach one day and taken to the Foundation for Oceanic Research, where his unique abilities were used for the good of mankind. Powers: His webbed hands and feet and unique swimming style allow him to cut through the water quicker than Kieren Perkins. He

